Introduction

> Charity is a big business and as such it should be run with business efficiency.[1]
>
> Richard Reuter, 1953

In 1990 Harold Gauer, former regional director of CARE in the American Midwest, published his professional memoirs entitled *Selling Big Charity: The Story of C.A.R.E.* In this book Gauer recalls his first CARE conference in the agency's New York headquarters in 1950. Having gained the impression that "out-of-towners" like him "would do well to just keep quiet and listen," Gauer silently observed how during the meeting "a parade of home office folk took turns telling the story of their jobs and how they did them. Which according to them was very capably indeed." After the CARE delegates from other US cities had responded "with tales of their own special local situations and with copious advice on how to run the home office," a group of "young intense" managers from the Lever Brothers Company showed up:

> They described a gigantic national advertising promotion involving Bob Hope, the National Broadcasting System, Young and Rubicam, and a host of spearbearers. People would send soap wrappers to CARE and in response CARE would send Lever Brothers soap to the needy abroad. At day's end, a select group [of CARE employees] retired through the back way, across a narrow canyon between tall buildings called Exchange Place, to the Hargus Cafe. The Lever Brothers fellows were buying. The place featured a stock ticker at the front with tickertape flowing into a wastebasket, and "gibsons" which were martinis with an onion, merely, and free platters of french fried meatballs. There was more talk about the soap wrapper promotion and extravagant predictions by the field people on how well the idea would play in their areas.[2]

This brief scene – which might possibly remind readers fond of pop culture of the TV series *Mad Men* – provides a highly subjective, yet very interesting insight into what was, at the time, one of the largest humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) worldwide. Aware and proud of CARE's charitable purpose, its central role in global humanitarian relief, and its public visibility in international politics, Gauer alludes to various aspects of humanitarian practice that are usually ignored or

hidden. Not only does he discuss money, fundraising, and CARE's business relations with commercial enterprises, broadcasting networks, and advertising agencies, but he also confronts us with organizational hierarchies, internal networks among co-workers, and the exclusive parties where these networks were forged and extended. While mostly ironic in tone, seemingly random in its choice of anecdote, and written from an idiosyncratic third-person perspective, Gauer's book shows that "caring for others" in a humanitarian NGO is a comfortable bedfellow with making money, professionalism, organizational growth, and a business-like attitude.

Whereas Gauer's perspective and his style of writing may have been unique, his perception of "charity as business" certainly was not. As indicated by the opening quote from CARE's third executive director, Richard Reuter, many of those involved in CARE felt that helping others and engaging in humanitarian relief required much more than goodwill. They considered CARE's work to be a serious business, and humanitarian engagement to be an activity that demanded entrepreneurial skills, steady professionalization, and a continuous expansion of the organization, its impact and its visibility.

This contemporary view of charity as business has informed my understanding of CARE. Despite it being a non-profit enterprise – promoting contemporary humanitarian ideas and specific practices that were (and still are) identified with altruistic behavior and normative notions of global solidarity – CARE operated in a market environment. As such, it competed with other agencies for dollars, ideas, publicity, and people. In addition, CARE had to deal with challenges similar to any business enterprise: management and corporate governance, acquisition and finance, technology and innovation, marketing and distribution, accounting and communication, fundraising and staffing; all alongside the need to respond to changing and globalizing markets.[3] In writing this book on CARE, I have thus profited greatly from methodological tools, concepts, and ideas originating in business history, organizational sociology, non-profit research, and institutional theory.[4] These readings have helped me make sense of CARE as both a value-driven humanitarian player, and a highly professional non-profit enterprise in the expanding international humanitarian relief and development aid sectors in the second half of the twentieth century.[5]

Focusing on the evolution of CARE from 1945, when it was founded as the Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe as a temporary private American relief organization, to 1980, by which time it had been transformed into CARE International, this book looks at CARE from two angles. The first is the angle of modern organizational history, meaning that it is concerned with CARE's development as a singular organization with its own particular mission, internal governance, processes of decision making, as well as economic strategies and administrative routines. This perspective includes individual people and their respective roles in CARE's development. Secondly, this book aims to add a historical-empirical bottom-up perspective to the increasingly popular (but rather abstract) scholarly

narrative of NGOs successfully finding their niche in the evolving "global nervous system" of humanitarian affairs.[6] In recent years, many scholars have suggested that we are witnessing a gradual "retreat of the state,"[7] or the evolution of new global modes of "governance without government"[8] in many sectors of society. The apparent evolution in the role of the state is often linked to the absolute increase in the number, size, and social impact of non-state actors since the 1920s on both national and international stages.[9] Given that the twentieth century was marked by two world wars, the bipolar international order of the Cold War, together with the turbulence of decolonization and sundry civil wars, it should not surprise us that private agencies subsequently became preeminent in the realms of conflict-related humanitarian relief, international disaster relief, and hunger prevention. Nevertheless, the idea of a significant rise of NGOs in the global provision of humanitarian assistance provides us only with a macro-perspective. Such a "view from the top" is certainly useful in seeing the big picture.[10] However, by using CARE as a bridge between a macro-perspective focusing on changing structures of humanitarian governance after 1945, and a micro-perspective that gives full recognition to the organization itself and to the individuals that shaped it, this book provides a complementary standpoint. Through CARE and its specific agency, both changing relations to government players, other NGOs, and corporate organizations, and these players' joint impact on alterations to the institutional foundations and normative rules of humanitarian governance during the second half of the twentieth century are analyzed.

CARE proves a rich source of material for shedding light on both particular events and general trends in humanitarian governance during the period under investigation. Having started out as a temporary private voluntary venture geared toward delivering food packages to needy individuals in Europe after the Second World War, the agency soon managed to become a highly prominent player in American overseas relief work.[11] As the Cold War increased in intensity, private relief to Europeans had a threefold effect. First, it helped to significantly alleviate the post-war food crisis. Secondly, it enlisted private Americans into the international relief drive. Thirdly, it contributed to the creation of a positive image of the United States and its citizens abroad. Given that official US reconstruction programs in Europe were predominantly geared toward the reconfiguration of markets and infrastructure, private relief – and CARE packages in particular – conveyed the message that the American people cared enough to provide even former enemies with food. In addition, American foodstuffs and sanitary products, such as Lever Brothers soap, gave the recipients of CARE packages a taste of and displayed the variety of Western products, thus serving as a harbinger of the eventual rise of "global America's" consumer culture overseas.[12]

As the 1950s approached, physical want in Western Europe began to wane. With its original mission becoming irrelevant, but still eager to put its skills and organizational apparatus to use, CARE's leaders foresaw the transition of private

and public American relief activities from Europe to the so-called developing countries. CARE's managers grasped fairly quickly that there was a growing yet untapped market in overseas aid. While international relief and official (development) aid soon became an integral part of both international diplomacy and many governments' foreign policies, many private players understood that there was room enough to accommodate private initiative. Changing its name into Cooperative for American Relief to Everywhere, CARE reoriented its focus.

By connecting private humanitarian relief activities with new institutions, public funding, and ideas drawn from modernization and development theories, the agency was instrumental in constructing a new type of public–private partnership in the field of food aid distribution. CARE's leaders consciously forged alliances with US agricultural producers, the US government, other NGOs, and political leaders all over the world. They thereby turned CARE into a major advocate for the use and distribution of American agricultural products in the Global South. As a food relief agency, CARE was present during the wars in Korea and Vietnam, at the Suez crisis in Egypt, in Colombia and Nicaragua, and in more than four dozen other countries around the world by the late 1970s. The organization's members took part in United Nations global conferences, organized and joined international charity campaigns, and dined with political and corporate leaders at global fundraisers. With hundreds of paid officers, and a multi-million dollar annual turnover, CARE also became a substantial economic player: between 1946 and 1951, CARE had already delivered private aid worth almost US$120 million to other nations (more than US$1 billion in 2015 prices). By 1975, its annual income alone exceeded US$170 million (US$749 million in 2015 prices).[13] Having started with a single standard package containing canned lard, sugar, oil, and other rather modest consumer goods, CARE had, by the late 1970s, broadened its portfolio to include emergency food aid, community building, the large-scale feeding of schools, medical aid programs, educational activities, volunteer training, and various forms of development consulting.

This organizational perspective, from small to large, from transatlantic to global – together with the timeframe under discussion – may suggest that this book simply narrates an unequivocal NGO success story: a teleological tale of continuity, expansion, and prosperity in the golden era of the post-war economic boom.[14] However, such a portrayal would be a one-dimensional account, as CARE's development is inexplicable without its many failures, crises, and manifold roads not taken. As an organization, CARE struggled repeatedly for its own survival. It came perilously close to bankruptcy on more than one occasion, and countless internal and external critics called into question its business model, its legitimacy as a private relief organization, and its humanitarian achievements. Moreover, both success and failure are highly contingent and subjective categories. For decades scholars have debated the practices, ideas, achievements, and detrimental effects of Western charitable and humanitarian engagement – food aid in particular.[15] The many "dilemmas of

humanitarian aid," such as the political or economic implications of relief in a politically bipolar world, the asynchronous relations between donors and recipients (or NGOs and governments), as well as ethical questions regarding advertising practices, the choice of aid projects, and the internal use of funds have all troubled both researchers and practitioners.[16] Hence, the history of CARE is also one of conflict and competition between CARE itself and the many other NGOs, international organizations, enterprises, and government bodies that had stakes in international humanitarian action, hunger prevention, and development throughout the second half of the twentieth century. Being, as it was, closely embedded in an "institutional field," CARE constantly constructed and reconfigured its institutional environment through conflict, communication, financial transfers, and the administrative practices it shared with the players mentioned above.[17]

Just as importantly, there was also conflict among the individuals who constituted CARE. As Harold Gauer reminds us, no organization is a homogeneous entity. Active CARE members were to be found in various functions and positions across the globe: CARE board members, management in the New York head office, field representatives all over the United States, overseas officers and local staff working in the CARE missions abroad. These several hundred employees experienced and represented the organization in manifold different ways. They were willing to fight for their ideas and beliefs, as well as for their professional networks and, crucially, their paychecks.[18] Indeed, organizations as social systems do not function "despite the messy, multifaceted humanness of actors, but because of it."[19] From its inception, CARE's members, directors, and employees cooperated and competed, argued and agreed, negotiated and conspired with each other, and with colleagues from other NGOs, governments, and international organizations. This was all in order to push a general humanitarian agenda, the organization's specific goals, and their individual career interests. They were a part of the "tremendous internationalization, institutionalization, and rationalization of global affairs" in the twentieth century and adapted their organizations to a constantly changing environment, new social, political, and technical trends, new frames of knowledge, and volatile economic circumstances.[20]

In order to do justice to CARE's growing dimensions and to try to make sense of the various challenges arising from international operations, I have complemented the five main chapters on CARE's organizational development from 1945 to 1980 with three case studies. These chapters specifically focus on CARE operations overseas, on communications between head and foreign offices, and on the way CARE conducted its business in a foreign environment. The first case study on Korea sheds light on CARE's transition from Europe to "everywhere" and on the way the organization positioned itself in the precarious diplomatic environment of the Cold War. The second case study deals with Egypt. It analyzes CARE's overseas operations, highlights the reasons for its exponential growth in the 1950s and 1960s, and shows how the new public–private partnership in the field of food

relief came about. The last chapter on CARE and the Peace Corps in Colombia provides deeper insights into the difficulties CARE experienced with extending its portfolio from food relief to development consulting. Other case studies could have been chosen, of course. The Philippines (where CARE started operating in 1949), Vietnam (1954), or Lesotho (1969) would certainly have offered highly interesting perspectives and insights into humanitarian dilemmas and operational conflicts as well. However, when studying an agency that has had offices on practically every continent, one must inevitably single out certain examples. The case studies in this book are thus exemplary, but I have done my utmost to do justice to CARE's international operations, its various types of humanitarian practice, as well as to the contemporaries' diverse perspectives and their historical frames of knowledge. Hence, this book tells CARE's story on two different yet connected levels: first as a history of individuals and their interactions, conflicts, initiatives, and alliances *within* CARE, and secondly as an organizational history focusing on institutional networks, CARE's role in international diplomacy, and its embeddedness in the emerging "new humanitarian international" order of the second half of the twentieth century.[21]

The American tradition of voluntary overseas relief – perspectives

Terms and concepts are not neutral. They are instead imbued with meaning and reflect the changing nature of human ideas and practices.[22] This is equally true for the term *non-governmental organization*. While I have thus far been using the term to classify CARE and other private relief organizations, it is important to underscore that NGO is first and foremost a generic concept that reflects a specific *ideal* model of state–society relations. Originating from the United Nations' classification system, it marked a clear divide between states, international organizations, and all other (presumably minor) players that concerned themselves with international politics.[23] However, outside the sphere of international affairs and the scholarly field of international relations theory, the term NGO was far less common for most of the twentieth century. CARE, like most other American relief organizations, referred to itself as a "private voluntary agency," or sometimes as a "[humanitarian] non-profit organization." Both terms are linked to a particular American charitable tradition and institutional culture of voluntary overseas relief.[24] Naturally, this tradition has been shaped by transnational influences and the international circulation of ideas, goods, and people.[25] However, specific American legislative processes, cultural norms, and particular social and economic realities have left a visible imprint on the ideas, practices, and institutional configuration of voluntary associations in the United States.[26]

The specific form of American humanitarian action abroad dealt with in this book dates back to the late eighteenth and nineteenth century.[27] Emily S. Rosenberg and others have convincingly argued that the first philanthropic activities outside of

the United States were often conducted by religious organizations that wanted to tackle not only perceived spiritual needs, but also all kinds of physical diseases born out of poverty, hunger, and purported backwardness. Over time, many of these religious organizations "gradually developed a more secular, professional-scientific cast" toward the field of relief work.[28] With the world constantly shrinking thanks to advances in transportation, commodity markets, and communications, the task of "spreading the American dream" to other less affluent societies became increasingly important to these organizations.[29] By broadening their missions from the religiously oriented to the increasingly universalistic (simultaneously often maintaining a religious bias), these proto-humanitarian missionary groups eventually reoriented their ideas and practice toward the wellbeing of all of mankind in a broader sense.[30]

Both nineteenth- and twentieth-century contemporary discourse, together with widely read authors of international relations theory, tended to assume that NGOs or private voluntary agencies were categorically different and independent from government institutions.[31] After all, the very concept of *non-governmental* organizations is unthinkable without the nation-state and national governmental institutions representing the other side of the coin. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that this divide between voluntary agencies representing "civil society" and government bodies representing the nation-state is not as clear cut as academic theory and popular discourse may suggest.[32] National governments have been powerful and important partners for private humanitarian organizations for over a century, facilitating access to foreign countries and providing both infrastructure and political leverage in international diplomacy.[33] Despite a traditional rhetoric indicating otherwise, most American voluntary agencies have cooperated very closely with governments (national and foreign) by accepting juridical, diplomatic, and political guidance, alongside building joint networks and accepting direct financial subsidies. In addition, the barrier between the sectors was, in terms of careers, permeable, with leaders of humanitarian NGOs often switching from jobs in the non-profit sector to government posts and back again.

The First World War was undoubtedly instrumental in fostering new forms of cooperation between NGOs and governments.[34] The atrocities and hardship caused by industrial warfare led to a dramatic surge in the number of private humanitarian organizations both in the United States and in Europe, a fact that points toward the relationship between the bellicosity of states and private relief activity in modern societies. While many other established forms of cross-border philanthropy (for example in the arts or education sector) stalled during the war, the era of large-scale private humanitarian involvement had just begun.[35]

It was against the backdrop of war and interwar upheaval that relations between private voluntary organizations, government, and military players became increasingly formalized.[36] In the United States new sophisticated forms of government–NGO

cooperation emerged – including transnational arrangements, as Tammy M. Proctor has recently shown.[37] Under the auspices of the semi-governmental American Relief Administration (ARA), established by President Wilson in early 1919, and the American Red Cross, a large number of private relief agencies coordinated their efforts to channel relief goods from American to European ports in order to feed and clothe civilians affected by war.[38] This relief drive marked a turning point in American humanitarian activities abroad. Somewhat paradoxically, it heralded the unprecedented involvement of individuals and civil society organizations in international relief activities, while concurrently food relief became increasingly politicized, with humanitarian relief soon becoming a significant anti-Bolshevik foreign policy tool.[39] The post-war relief drive demonstrated the effectiveness of public–private humanitarian coordination and established a precedent for large-scale transfers of public funds through private players.

While many of these arrangements stalled during the interwar years, and – as we shall see – new and ever-closer forms of institutional cooperation developed after the Second World War between voluntary agencies and international governments, the overall trend is clear. It is overly simplistic to posit a "retreat of the state" in the area of humanitarian relief and foreign aid in the second half of the twentieth century. Rather, NGOs and governments developed increasingly sophisticated forms of cooperation, financial transfers, and joint institutional patterns. As statistics for the United States show, government co-funding of private voluntary activity has constantly increased since the 1920s, for the first time exceeding 50 percent of all non-profit expenditures by the mid-1960s.[40] These macro-data certainly need further qualitative interpretation, particularly in regards to the practical (political) effects of public funding on NGO agencies in different fields. However, the fact that economic transfers from the public to the private sector have indeed increased quite remarkably during the period of investigation clearly supports one of the central hypotheses of this book: that the rise of (humanitarian) NGOs in the twentieth century was hardly detached from the politics, legal frameworks, and funding strategies of national governments and their administrations. On the contrary, NGOs such as CARE developed into highly professional private international relief agencies, not *despite* or in antagonism to the nation-state, but instead as integral partners to government.

Hence, while the upcoming eight chapters focus on CARE as a particular organization with a distinct political, economic, and organizational agenda in the field of humanitarian food relief and development aid, I have put much emphasis on its innate embeddedness in social relations to partners and competitors on both sides of the somewhat blurry public–private divide. Against this backdrop, CARE's history serves as a revealing case study, one that helps to unravel the multifaceted institutional connections and interdependencies between the diverse players that had stakes in twentieth-century international humanitarianism.

Notes

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36 See, for example, Daniel Roger Maul, "Silent Army of Representatives. Amerikanische NGOs und die Entstehung internationaler Mechanismen humanitärer Hilfe 1917–1939," in Christoph Meyer and Sönke Kunkel (eds.), *Aufbruch ins Postkoloniale Zeitalter. Globalisierung und die außereuropäische Welt in den 1920er und 1930er Jahren*, Frankfurt a.M. and New York, 2012, pp. 105–22.

37 Tammy M. Proctor, "An American Enterprise? British Participation in US Food Relief Programmes (1914–1923)," *First World War Studies* 5.1 (2014), pp. 29–42.

38 Irwin, *Making the World Safe*, pp. 70–8, 174–82.

39 Helen Zoe Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food. Self-control, Science, and the Rise of Modern American Eating in the Early Twentieth Century*, Chapel Hill, NC, 2013, pp. 58, 76; Matthew Lloyd Adams, "Herbert Hoover and the Organization of the American Relief Effort in Poland (1919–1923)," *European Journal of American Studies* 2 (2009), pp. 1–16 (pp. 4–5), http://ejas.revues.org/7627 (accessed June 5, 2015); Bertrand M. Patenaude, *The Big Show in Bololand. The American Relief Expedition to Soviet Russia in the Famine of 1921*, Stanford, CA, 2002; Benjamin M. Weissman, *Herbert Hoover and Famine Relief to Soviet Russia, 1921–1923*, Stanford, CA, 1974.

40 C. Eugene Steuerle and Virginia A. Hodgkinson, "Meeting Social Needs. Comparing the Resources of the Independent Sector and Government," in Elizabeth T. Boris and C. Eugene Steuerle (eds.), *Nonprofits and Government. Collaboration and Conflict*, Washington DC, 2006, pp. 71–98; see also Virginia Ann Hodgkinson et al., *Nonprofit Almanac 1996–1997. Dimensions of the Independent Sector*, San Francisco, 1996.